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The book cover is a deep red color with a gold-embossed design. At the top, an arched window contains a bird in flight, possibly a swallow, with its wings spread. The background within the arch is filled with small, five-pointed stars. On either side of the arch, there are vertical panels containing stylized floral and leaf patterns. The central text is arranged in three lines, with the first line being the most decorative and the others more straightforward. The entire design is framed by a simple gold border.

AN IRISH  
MIDSUMMER  
NIGHT'S DREAM



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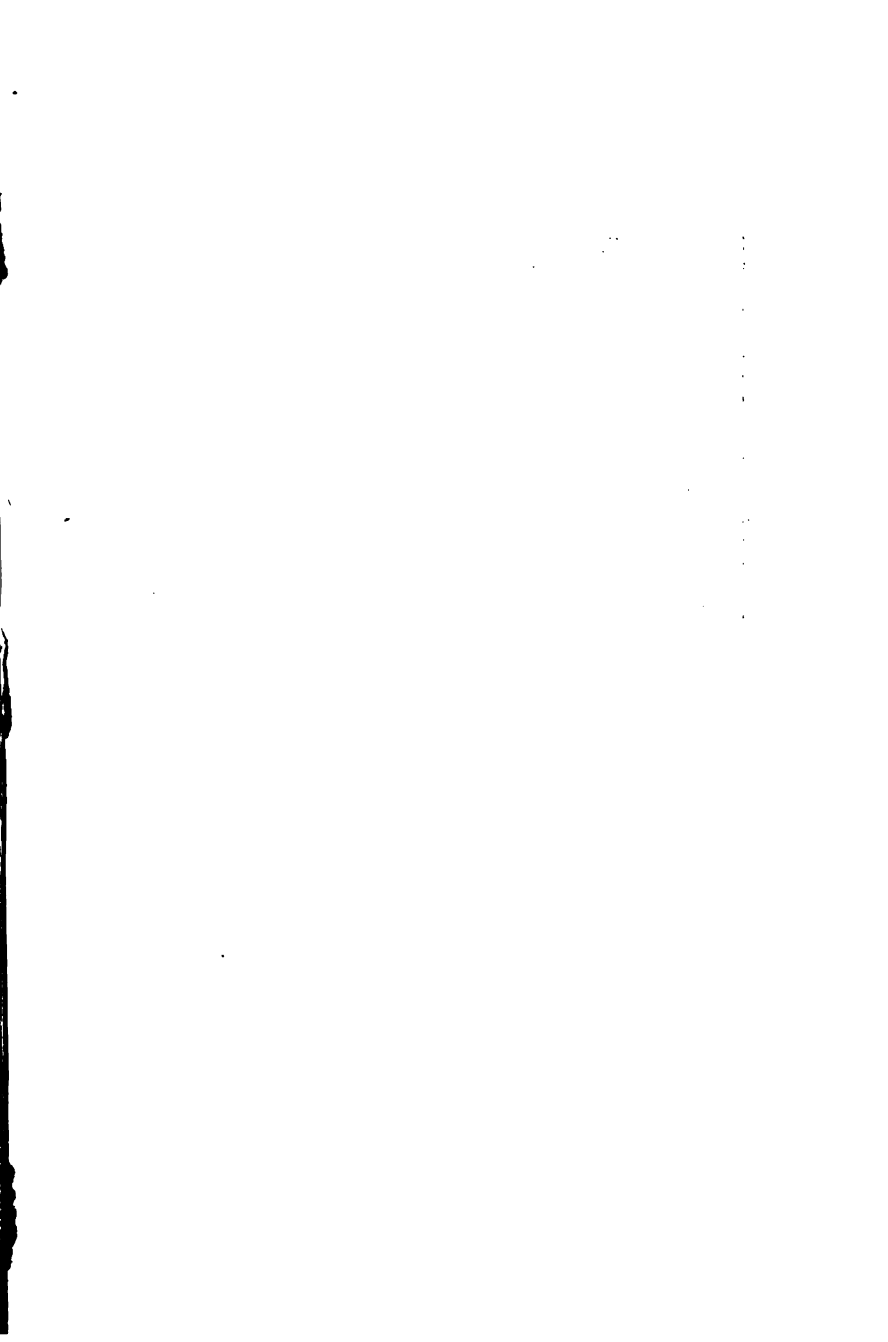




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**AN IRISH MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.**









AN  
IRISH MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

A LEGEND OF THE SHANNON.

BY  
JOHN BICKERDYKE, M.A.,  
AUTHOR OF "WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS," ETC., ETC.

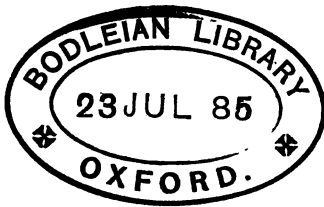
Masters, I am to discourse wonders. . . . I will tell you everything,  
right as it fell out.

—MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, Act IV., Sc. II.

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1884.

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## PREFACE.

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LOUGH DERG is, perhaps, the most lovely of the large lakes formed by expansions of that noble river, the Shannon. Most of the peasants who live near its shores have a profound belief in the existence of the Lake Fairies, and many are the tales told, usually with bated breath, of the sometimes friendly, sometimes mischievous, doings of the "Good People".

How did I hear of all the queer incidents recorded in the following tale? I cannot say; Andy did not tell me. Possibly on some calm summer's night as, sitting in my boat, I enjoyed by moonlight the peaceful

beauties of the lake, Fairy Queen Cribby riding near on her handsome May-fly, whispered the tale into my willing ears. But this alone I know, that under the fairy-like surroundings of Lough Derg, and on its very bosom, I wrote this tale.

That all who read it, young and old, may receive as much pleasure as it has given its writer is my one wish.

JOHN BICKERDYKE.

## AN IRISH MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.



ANDY ALLAN, the merriest and poorest ne'er-do-well in Mount Shannon, was hungry and tired. The previous day, a lady had dropped a valuable ring into the lake, and for two long hours he had dived and groped about for it—but to no purpose. A large reward—no less than ten pounds—was offered for its recovery, and Andy, being the best swimmer and diver in the village, had looked upon the money as his own. He had even told his wife how they would be able to buy a long-wished-for cow; and, as he went out of the door, had promised his three gossoons something better than

the usual Indian meal "stir-a-bout" for their supper that evening.

The water was clear as crystal. Every pebble could be seen distinctly on the gravelly bottom, and yet the ring could not be found.

"Oh musha, musha!" said Andy to himself. "What will the missus say when I go home wid me pockets empty? and the childers looking out for such a grand bit of supper to-night," for he had felt certain of getting the reward. "Faith, I won't go home empty-handed, anyhow," he continued, "but will get me trolling rods, and belt away at the pike; so maybe they'll have something better nor 'stir-a-bout' after all."

Having thus determined, Andy fetched his rods, and started off to fish round a great bed of reeds far out in the lake, where he had often hauled in many a fine pike.

Here, on his way to the fishing grounds, we must, for the moment, leave him.

\* \* \* \* \*

About Lough Derg—the lake where the events written of in this tale took place—are dotted numerous small islands which were, and probably still are, inhabited by tribes of fairies; each tribe being governed by a queen, and sometimes, also, by a king. The country people call these small beings the “Good People”.

Now on this particular evening a great event was to happen on the Isle of Cribby. The fairies had sent out invitations to nearly all their friends of the other islands, to join them in a grand ball, given in honour of the marriage between Princess Sweetbrier of Cribby Island, and Prince Purple-Heather of Bushy Island.

The Fairy Queen of Cribby had, as she



thought, included the fairies of all the Islands in her invitations. Unfortunately, her messenger, an otter, had dropped some of the notes by the way, in attempting to catch a fat trout which had darted temptingly near him. He imagined he had picked them all up, but one had slipped behind a rock, and he did not miss it. He was an old otter and his sight was failing him. "Bother their balls and fandangos," he had said; "I never engaged myself as a postman to Queen Cribby for a paltry six trout a week to do all this work. 'Double work, double pay,' that's my motto. If it wasn't for the odd eels the youngsters catch for me when I carry their rose-leaves" (the note-paper on which fairies write their love letters) "I should starve." And being annoyed by the number of invitations he had to carry, and at not having caught the

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trout, he never troubled to count the dainty little notes. Thus it came about that the invitation intended for Fairy Queen Carrigeen, and her court, was not delivered.

It not being the fashion amongst the little folks to invite their friends until the day of the party, there was hardly time for the gossips to spread the report that the Fairy Queen of Carrigeen had been neglected. You may be sure that, if the amiable Queen of Cribby had known of the omission, the matter would soon have been set right.

As the ball had been a common subject of conversation among the fairies for the previous three weeks, and as they had every reason to expect an invitation, the "Good People" of Carrigeen thought themselves intentionally slighted. A great council was being held amongst them that evening to consider the best way to revenge the sup-

posed insult, when, in the midst of their deliberations, word was brought in by their watchmen,—or, more correctly, watch-fairies,—that a boat containing a mortal was in sight.

This was no other than our friend Andy, who had been dragging two large spoon-baits along for some hours without so much as a pull from a fish. He was now making for the Carrigeen Islands to rest himself before starting on his long row home.

The “Good People,” be it known, have the greatest objection to any mortal visiting their domains, on account of the damage done to their sweet-smelling flowers, delicate insects, and lustrous beetles, by the reckless footsteps of men. Thus, when the fairies of Carrigeen saw Andy approach the island, all thoughts of the ball, for the moment, went from them, and a hasty consultation

was held as to the best means of keeping him off. Some of the younger and more impetuous suggested violent remedies.

“Sink his boat,” said one.

“Twist his lines in the rocks,” said another.

The Fairy Queen of Carrigeen now spoke. “Listen to me,” she said. “This mortal has done us no harm, and rarely comes on our islands ; for which we should be grateful. In *his* case we have no studied insult to revenge,” here the little fairy looked majestically terrible. “Now I think I know a way by which we can do him a good turn, and at the same time prevent him from landing here.” Every eye turned with anxious curiosity on the speaker. “Call the Fairy Public Prosecutor.”

In a few seconds that official made his appearance.

“Which of our fish slaves have been disobedient lately, and are awaiting their trial?” asked the Queen.

“May it please Your Royal Highness,” replied the Fairy Public Prosecutor, “none; except that old offender, Six-Foot-Jack, *alias* John Pike.”

“What has he been guilty of?”

“The worst of crimes, Your Highness. No less than murder; inasmuch as on Monday last, in his great greediness, he caught, killed, and ate a water-hen, a particular favourite of your royal daughter.”

“His punishment shall be death,” said the Queen; and turning to her court:—  
“Fairies, this miserable offender shall be taken under water to where this man is fishing, his mouth forced open, the hooks placed in it, and he shall not be left until the man has dragged him into his boat. By

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this act we shall accomplish three things. First, the man flushed with success, will continue his fishing, or possibly hurry home with his prize—at any rate, he is almost certain not to land here; next, we bestow the gift of a large pike on a deserving mortal; and in the third place, the miscreant fish will be rightly punished for his greed.”

Many were the murmurs of approval from the courtiers at the close of the Queen's speech; and the Fairy Public Prosecutor despatched two otters, holding the prisoner securely bound with eels, in the direction of Andy's boat, there to carry out the wishes of the Fairy Queen.

This little affair being so far settled, the fairies continued their consideration of the supposed slight put upon them by Queen Cribby, and the best method of resenting it.

Queen Carrigeen was holding her court in

a sylvan dell, far from the shore, and out of the sight of passing fishermen.

In this delicious spot the fairies had cultivated with the greatest care the most beautiful of the wild flowers growing on the lake islands; their chief favourites being those which usually blossom in spring, which, by secrets known only to themselves, they were able to keep in bloom nearly all the year round.

Most of the little people were seated on sprigs of purple heather, hardly bending with their light weight; on wood anemones, yellow iris, narcissus, wild hyacinths, white violets, and other lovely and sweet-smelling flowers.

Enthroned on the topmost blossom of a stately foxglove was the Queen, looking as majestic as a little being only five inches high could look.

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“We have now to consider,” said she, “our course of action towards Queen Cribby. For my part, though I should not have gone to the ball if I had been asked”—here those of the male fairies who were not immediately under her gaze smiled guardedly—“nevertheless, such a slight never having been put upon us before, I feel it inconsistent with our dignity, self-respect, and self-esteem, not to resent it.”

A certain amount of respectful applause followed this speech, and an aged fairy who, from the attention with which he was listened to, was evidently of some note, said:—

“The subjects of your Majesty have heard with due reverence your royal opinions, and are willing, should your Majesty declare war, to fight to the last drop of their blood.”

“Brothers and sisters,” replied the Queen, “So much, I will not ask of you; but if



you can devise a plan by which this wretched ball can be spoiled without much trouble or inconvenience to us, then I will ask you to do whatever may be necessary to carry out that plan."

A long silence now ensued ; all the fairies puzzling their little brains to invent such a scheme as would please the Queen. At last a silvery little voice from out the depths of a harebell exclaimed—

"I have it ! Send the man who was coming here on to their island, and keep him there. That will spoil their ball for them !"

This, though it may seem strange, was perfectly true, the presence of a mortal being quite sufficient to prevent the ball being held.

"How can we get him there ?" queried the Queen.

“Why, blow him there, your Majesty,” replied the little fairy of the harebell. “Only prevail on your royal sister, the Fairy Queen of the Lake Winds, to blow up a great gale as the man is passing Cribby, and he will be forced to land there for shelter. Once there, your faithful otters can send his boat adrift. Then, good-bye to their paltry ball.”

“Well spoken, brother,” said the Queen; “it is not the first time you have advised us when in difficulty, and, as usual, your plan is excellent. Disperse now, friends, and you, Harebell, bring me a roseleaf that I may write to my sister, the Queen of the Lake Winds.”

The important document was soon written, and despatched by a trusty cormorant. The fairy court was about breaking up, when the Fairy Public Prosecutor returned,

with a face suitably grave for the occasion. All gathered round him.

“Your Majesty’s wishes have been carried out,” he said. “That wicked and depraved John Pike, commonly known as Six-Foot-Jack, has expiated his crime on the hook.”

“And the man, is he still fishing?” asked the Queen.

“He is, your Majesty, and in the direction of Cribby.”

“’Tis well,” remarked the Queen thoughtfully; and, having given orders for the otters to set Andy’s boat adrift should he land on Cribby, she descended from the top of the foxglove. Taking her seat on the back of a handsome yellow Mayfly of large size, held ready for her by Harebell, she set out for her usual afternoon ride over the lake; the other fairies going their various ways.

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About the time that the fairy watchmen had brought the news to the Queen of Andy's approach, he was, in fact, on the point of giving up fishing, and landing on Carrigeen to rest himself. Still more tired and hungry was he than when he gave up the search for the ring, and his discontent was finding its vent in words.

“Bad cess to it!” he grumbled. “Was there ever such luck as mine? Bedad, I've a good mind to throw the rods overboard. Here I've been working me hardest and doing me besht ever since eight the morn, and not a saxpence have I earned. Oh, musha, musha, what an unfortunate baste I am!” sighed poor Andy; and, placing one of his rods in the boat, he began to haul in the line.

Andy's tackle was of the most primitive kind, but it had one good quality; it was

strong. No greenheart rod, ebonite check winch, plaited silk line, and twisted gut trace, were there—nor did he sigh for such luxuries. For rods he had two small larch poles, about twelve feet long. To the end of each of these, securely fastened, were twenty yards of strong hemp cord twisted by himself. A spoon-bait fastened to the cord by a piece of twisted wire, a piece of lead, and a swivel, completed his outfit. Winches and running lines he had never heard of. Indeed, few pike were so heavy that he could not drag them in with his hempen line. If they happened to be too strong for him, all he had to do was to “chuck them the rod,”\* as he called it;

\* Isaac Walton did likewise: “And it may be by giving that very great trout the rod, that is, by casting it to him into the water, I might have caught him at the long run, for so I use always to do when I meet with an over-grown fish”.—*The Complete Angler*.

letting them tow it about until they were tired. These few details are necessary to explain what followed.

Andy had just taken in one rod and line, and had his hand stretched out to take in the other, when, to his intense amazement, a tremendous tug came at the end of the rod, and in a moment it was out of the boat cutting along the top of the water.

The otters had done their duty well. After having opened their prisoner's mouth and inserted the hooks of Andy's spoon-bait, they gave him a bite which sent him off like a torpedo, the hooks well into him, and with the result we have seen to Andy's rod.

Of course Andy knew nothing of all this, beyond that he had a big fish on which had not waited to have the rod "chucked" to him. For the moment all he could do was

to sit open-mouthed, ejaculating, "Oh! murder! Did you ever see the like?" and then answering his own question, "Faith, I never did!"

But a very few seconds sufficed to bring Andy to himself, and murmuring gently:—"Ar, me darlin, I'm afther you! I'll tach ye to walk off wid me rod in that way," he started in pursuit. He did not, however, get his rod for some time, as the otters, by direction of the Fairy Public Prosecutor, chased the pike in the reverse direction to Carrigeen, with the object of leading its pursuer as far away as possible. But the time was drawing near when the unfortunate fish could go no farther, and, much to Andy's delight, he noticed that his rod was sailing away more slowly. At last he was able to shoot up along side, and catch hold of it; but even then the

pike was too much for him, and Andy had to "chuck him the rod" and row after it as before. Then came another attempt, and another failure; but the third time he was more successful, and he found he could play the fish, which was now completely tired out. In a very few minutes the miserable Six-Foot-Jack was hauled up to the top of the water, the cruel gaff-hook stuck into him, and, with a mighty effort on the part of Andy, lifted into the boat.

"O glory! but he's a big fish! Just a pig and nothing else! Forty pounds and not an ounce less!" cried Andy with great glee. Knocking the monster on the head, he again put out his rods to fish on the way home. He now felt very happy, and no longer deplored his bad luck in not finding the ring. Contentedly rowing along, he alternately considered the knotty



point, whether to eat the pike or sell him, and chaunted a stave or so of some of the many merry songs he knew.

But, alas for mortals that fairies are sometimes mischievous and resentful ! Andy's adventures were not yet over.

Passing by Cribby Island a terrible gale sprung up, and so angry were the waves, and so fierce the wind, that our friend had no choice, but to get to the "sheltry" side of the island, and land there to wait for the abatement of the storm.

But the Fairy Queen of the Lake Winds was doing the bidding of her sister only too well, and, though the sky was of a clear dark blue, and a serene calm moon was just peeping above the hill-tops, nevertheless, rather to Andy's surprise, the wind did not go down. He began to feel that he was fated to spend the night there, and had

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just seated himself behind a rock to consider which was the most comfortable part of the island to make his bed, when, to his horror, he saw his boat slip from the shore. In a few seconds the fierce wind had blown it out of reach. Finally, it lodged on a rock not very far away, and he had thoughts of swimming out to it; but, on looking at the thick fringe of weeds which skirted the shore, he quickly gave up all ideas of getting it that night.

“Begor, that settles it,” said Andy, not half so annoyed as might be expected, for he was beginning to feel tired again, now, and a night in the open was nothing to the hardy fellow. Having picked some armfulls of fragrant heather, he made a bed among the rocks, fit for an alderman, and was soon sleeping, dreaming of giant pike, and little thinking what a consternation his

arrival had caused among the Fairy Islanders.

Poor Queen Cribby was indeed in what is vulgarly called, "a great state of mind," when she learnt that a mortal was on the island.

Andy's arrival had not at first been noticed, as most of the little folk were busy, preparing for the ball, at some distance from the shore. It was not until his snores, reverberating among the rocks, had struck the drums of their sharp little ears, that they had any idea of the misfortune which had befallen them. A number of the younger and more active at once darted down to the place, whence came the sound, and soon a dozen or so little fairies were perched on the rock, under shelter of which Andy was sleeping, gazing down, with anything but a pleased expression, on the "ugly, grunting,

red-haired mortal," as one of them unflatteringly called him.

Fairy Queen Cribby had gone through a good deal of excitement that day in getting her daughter, Princess Sweetbrier, married to Prince Purple-Heather of Bushey. The young couple had left early in the afternoon in a handsome coach—made of thistle-down and drawn by ten may-flies, to pass their honeymoon on a secluded island, and the Queen-mother was very depressed in consequence of her daughter's departure. If it had not been for the ball, which was coming off that evening, she would certainly have broken down altogether, but the recollection that she had to receive the congratulations of all the Lake Fairies on her daughter's marriage, kept her up.

This last blow, however, was more than she could bear; and when her light-footed

little subjects who had been to see the snorer came in, and told her that a mortal was on the island who seemed likely to stop there all night, she gave shriek after shriek and was soon in violent hysterics. The hysterics were succeeded by a fainting-fit, and the fainting-fit by more hysterics. Finally, she was tenderly carried off to her bower by the ladies-in-waiting amid the lamentations of her courtiers.

As matters then stood, the failure of the ball seemed a certainty. Some of the older fairies who did not much care about dancing, and who were, perhaps, inwardly rather pleased than otherwise, at the turn affairs were taking, began to pull down the decorations, and to act just as if the ball could not, by any possibility, take place.

The younger fairies, however, who had been looking forward for weeks to this

night, were by no means inclined to give up their pleasure so easily. A knot of these discontented ones were gathered under a hawthorn bush excitedly discussing affairs.

“What’s the good of being fairies if we can’t do as we like?” said one who carried on his head a blossom of the wild convolvulus, and wore an elegant coat made out of white butterflies’ wings.

“Not a bit,” said another.

“Now just listen to me,” said a third who was called Daffodil. “Its no use our grumbling. Grumbling never does any good, and we didn’t come here to grumble. What we did come hear for, was to consider how we can have the ball, in spite of this ugly mortal being on the island. None of you seem to have any idea what’s best to be done, and I havn’t anything to suggest myself. Hadn’t we better consult the

Queen's Owl? He has always struck me as *looking* very wise, and perhaps he will be able to help us."

"Agreed!" they all cried. "Now for the Owl!" and, tripping lightly over the mossy stones, they soon arrived before the ivy-covered tree where dwelt the Queen's chief counsellor.

"What do you want?" said the solemn bird.

"O Owl! Wisest of birds, we are in a great difficulty," said the spokesman of the party.

The oracle gave himself a shake and ruffled his feathers.

"Now, out with it," he said sharply. "I suppose its something about the ball."

"Oh, what a wise Owl!" they all cried, and then Daffodil, the little fairy who had before spoken, explained their difficulty.

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Now the sagacious bird was puzzled, but would not own it. He suggested several outrageous things, such as dropping a rock on Andy's head, drowning him; things which none of the good little fairies would have done, even for twenty balls. At last a really brilliant idea struck him.

"You know," he said, "that there is on the island one of you who has the power, if she would choose to exercise it, of turning this mortal into a fairy. If you can get that done, he could join in your dance, and there would be no reason for the ball to be put off."

"Splendid! Capital!" came from the little folks; "but who can do it?"

"Why the Queen, to be sure," replied the bird.

"But the Queen is in all kinds of faints and hysterics. How can we get her to do it?"



“Oh, get away! You’re a regular nuisance. That’s your business, not mine. There now, I won’t be bothered any more. This comes of being wise. I havn’t had any supper yet, and shant get any, if I sit here all night wasting my wisdom on you.” Saying which, the Owl launched itself into the air, and, with a couple of hoots, flapped away in search of its supper, mightily glad of any excuse to get out of the difficulty of answering the little people’s questions, and, at the same time, keeping up its reputation for great knowledge and sagacity.

When the little body of fairies, full of fresh hopes, arrived at the entrance to the Queen’s apartments, four glow-worms (hall porters and front door lamps combined) stopped their way. The Queen, though now greatly recovered, could not see them, being engaged with the Fairy Queen of the

Lake Winds, who had come early for the ball, in fact rather before the time.

Fairy Souwester—as the Queen of the Lake Winds was playfully called by her friends—had not the slightest idea that the storm she was raising to please her sister, Queen Carrigeen, was to have the effect of spoiling Queen Cribby's ball. In fact she had looked upon it as a mere whim of her relative. When, therefore, she arrived at Cribby Island, she was greatly astonished to see the decorations being taken down, and still more astonished when she learned the cause from her fairy hostess. In a few words, Fairy Souwester told of her sister's strange request, which immediately became evident to the quick comprehension of the two Fairy Queens, was made with the object of driving poor Andy on to the island, and thus preventing the ball being held.

But why ? that was the question.

“Perhaps the bearer of your invitation may know something of it,” suggested the Fairy Queen of the Winds.

“Possibly he may,” assented the other doubtfully ; “I will question him.”

The postman otter was then sent for, and, on his confessing his negligence, the whole affair became clear. The police of the island—which consisted of four other otters—were called in, and the miserable old postman, murmuring bitterly, was carried to a cave—the common jail—there to await his trial.

All this while the glow-worms, staunch and trustworthy servants that they were, held their ground, both against the proffered bribes, and, I am almost ashamed to say, menaces of the now highly excited little fairies. The Queen, hearing the noise, sent

out her favourite page, a lovely Green Beetle, to find out the cause of the uproar. He quickly brought back word that it was occasioned by some of her subjects who were eager to have the ball, and who believed that, with her Majesty's assistance, it could be held. They were at once admitted into the royal presence, and a very few minutes served to tell of their visit to the Queen's Owl, and the advice he had given.

Turning to Fairy Souwester—who of course had lulled the storm after the otter's confession—the Fairy Queen said :—

“ This seems an excellent idea ; I wonder why it never occurred to us ? ”

“ Possibly because we are not owls,” replied the Fairy of the Winds, laughingly. “ Won't your Majesty give orders for the preparations for the ball to continue ? By

the time you have changed this mortal, your guests will be arriving."

"I will," said the Queen; and, giving her page a number of directions, and summoning her courtiers, she started off towards the spot where Andy was sleeping.

"What sort of a fairy do you think he'll make?" asked Fairy Souwester of the Queen, as they flew along side by side.

"My dear Souwester, I'm really dying to know," answered the Queen, who was all excitement. "I've never yet had occasion to turn a mortal into a fairy, but my mother did so several times. She used to say that the more ugly they were, the more lovely fairies they made."

"Oh, what a lovely fairy he'll be!" cried one of the little people who had already seen Andy, and who had overheard the latter part of the foregoing conversation.

The speaker, by name Dogrose, was one of a class of unfortunate fairies who had failed to find favour with the fairy youth of the island—a luckless spinster. Without being exactly old, she was certainly not young.

Daffodil, who had picked up a few words of French from a butterfly which had been blown all the way from France to Ireland by a violent south-easterly gale, declared that she was *passée*; and this word the other fairies caught up and used, though it is very doubtful if they knew the meaning of it.

To mortal eyes, however, she was beautiful, as all fairies are. It was only her too critical brethren who found fault with her.

Fairies never die. Those who have married, on attaining a good old age, retire for a while to certain mountains, where,

feeding on honey, culled from a flower known only to fairies, they gradually lose all appearance of age. At the end of about three years they rejoin their brethren once more, young and beautiful.

With those fairies who remain spinsters the case is different. At the age of thirty-five they are considered to have no more chance of marriage. That they have not married is held to be their own fault, for, all fairies being beautiful—though some more so than others—none, except the evil tempered, need long wait for husbands; more especially as there is, if anything, an excess of males in the fairy population. These bad-tempered spinsters, therefore, on attaining the age of thirty-five, are taken—usually in the bills of herons—to the mountains, there to live on the same food as the aged married fairies; not in their company,

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but in complete solitude. This life they lead for ten long years, gradually becoming younger, and, it is to be hoped, seeing the folly of their bad temper. At the end of that time, young and beautiful, they again join their friends. Such is the good result of this treatment, that they usually succeed in getting husbands within the first year of their return.

The little fairy, who had exclaimed as to Andy's probable beauty, had attained that age at which most females, fairies and otherwise, become desperate. When young, she had shown such an evil disposition, that none of the eligible fairies would have aught to say to her. On reaching maturer years she placed a strong check on her temper, hoping thereby to catch a husband. But she was too well known! Any marriageable fairy, who may have looked on



her with favour, was prevented from proposing by the consideration, that, if she was naturally evil-tempered, and was keeping it all in now to get a husband, there would, after marriage, be rather a larger amount of bottled-up-wrath to be poured on the head of her unfortunate mate, than was either pleasant or desirable.

It is possible that, as a dying man catches at a straw, so Dogrose may have thought that Andy, turned into a young and inexperienced fairy, might give her one chance more.

The little band was still on its way to the place where Andy was sleeping.

“How are you going to do it?” asked the Fairy Queen of the Lake Winds of Queen Cribby, as they flew along.

“Oh, the usual way,” replied the Queen.  
“I shall stand on a rock just above his

head; the Master of the Ceremonies will bring me my wand, which I shall take in my right hand, then, striking an attitude, I shall repeat a verse or two of poetry to the effect that I wish him to change from a mortal into a fairy; after that, of course, I shall stand on one foot, and stretching the other out gracefully behind, slowly wave the wand from side to side, over his head. If that don't change him, nothing will."

"It sounds all right," remarked Fairy Souwester, "and yet I seem to fancy you have made some slight mistake."

"Well, dear, it's just possible, for the whole thing is a novelty to me; but I'll ask my Master of the Ceremonies," and, turning to a dapper little fairy, Queen Cribby told him of her intentions, and again went over her proposed method of proceeding.

"With all due deference to your Majesty,

I would suggest the slightest possible alteration in your royal scheme," was the polite fairy's answer. "When it is desired to effect any transformation, visibly and slowly, the wand is waved from side to side over the subject. In this case, I apprehend, it would not be desirable to change him with such deliberation, as he might awake during the operation, and, objecting, make himself very unpleasant. A short, sharp tap with your Majesty's wand would effect a sharp, sudden, and startling transformation, and, I believe, leave nothing to be desired."

"I see the justice of your remarks, and will do as you advise," said the Queen, stepping upon a rock, the little party, at that moment, reaching the place where Andy was sleeping. "Ah, here is the mortal. Now fairies, a chorus if you please, and be careful about your time."

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Soon their little voices were raised in melody, echoing among the rocks and sounding sweetly over the now placid lake. But the Queen soon interrupted their song with—

“You’ve sung eight bars, and, as our time is short, that will have to do. Now for my business, give me my wand.” The Fairy Master of the Ceremonies presented it to her. Striking an attitude, she repeated, in the sweetest of voices, the following words over the still sleeping Andy :—

“Mortal, mortal, when thou wakest,  
Spell of fairy life thou takest.  
Turn to fairy for one night  
On account of fairy’s spite.  
Quick now, change! don’t lose a minute,  
Ball-room’s full of people in it.”

These lines were followed by several smart taps with the wand, on Andy’s shoulders.

“Dear me !” ejaculated the Queen ; “ why doesn’t he change ? ”

Greatly to their dismay, Andy slept on just as before. The Fairy Master of the Ceremonies, who had been busily engaged writing, now handed the Queen a paper, and said :—

“ I am afraid your Majesty did not say quite the right words, and each line should be repeated by a chorus of fairies.”

“ Why didn’t you tell me that before ? Look what a lot of time we’ve lost. Now fairies, remember, you have to sing each line after me,” and, taking the wand, she read the following, the chorus of fairies dutifully doing as they were bidden.

“ Ugly mortal, quickly wake ;  
Lovely form of fairy take.  
Join our merry ball to-night,  
Near prevented by the spite

Of our foe, the Fairy Queen  
Of the Island Carrigeen.  
Mortal, stranded by the storm,  
Quickly change thy mortal form,  
And no longer be yourself.  
Quick, become a fairy elf!"

Saying the last words, the Queen struck Andy sharply on the cheek with her wand ; and, in less than a quarter of a second, quicker than the eye could follow, the unkempt, red-haired, frieze-coated six-footer disappeared, and in his place was a lovely little fairy, not more than five inches high, sitting up and rubbing its eyes with a very puzzled air.

" Andy !" called the Queen.

" What is it, yer honour, marm ?" replied Andy, in a half-dazed condition.

" This young lady will take charge of you and make it all clear. We must to the ball

where our guests await us. You have our invitation to follow."

The Queen, who, like all females, was a match-maker at heart, had assigned Andy to the care of the fairy spinster, Dogrose, who, you may be sure, was nothing loath. For some little time her charge was rather intractable.

Andy's first feeling was of unqualified amazement; his second, that it was merely a dream; and, shutting his eyes, he again stretched his diminished body on the heather bed. This proceeding by no means suited our fairy spinster. Winding her arm round his neck, she whispered:—

"Come now, dearest Andy, you have slept enough. The Queen awaits us at the ball."

"Then it isn't a dhrame afther all," ejaculated Andy. "Be the powers, how small I've grown. Oh, wirra! wirra!

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What'll the missus say when she sees me like this? Gracious goodness, but look at me feet!"

"Very nice feet indeed," said the fairy, patting one of them with her hand; then, linking her arm in his, she strove with the sweetest words to persuade him to accompany her. For a long time Andy would not stir, for he felt in sore trouble, neither quite understanding, nor at all liking the change in his appearance. In the end, however, after many explanations and entreaties, he resigned himself to his fate, and told the fairy spinster to lead him where she would. By degrees his fears gave way to a sense of enjoyment in the society of his lovely companion—for lovely she appeared to him. She, like the old warrior she was, seeing the impression she was making, plied him with many of her oft



practised sweet looks and soft nothings. In reply, all the delighted Andy could do was to simper, and murmur, "Arrah now, be aisy, can't ye ; be aisy, I tell ye".

Hand in hand the little couple wandered off towards the centre of the island, where the dancing was to take place.

In a spacious ball-room Queen Cribby was receiving her fairy guests who were being led up to her, and announced by the Fairy Master of the Ceremonies. Seeing our little friends enter, the M.C. enquired Andy's name and title.

"Misther Andy Allen, if you plase, and King of Oireland," was the prompt reply. "Begor, no one knows me here," he chuckled to himself, "so the bigger man I make me-self out, the more they'll think of me," and he stiffened himself up, and tried to look as imposing as possible.

“The Lady Dogrose, and Mister Andy Allen, King of Ireland,” shouted the little Master of the Ceremonies.

“Come hither,” commanded the Queen ; “you are welcome. Stand here, at one side, until our guests have arrived, when we will talk with you.”

“As yer Honour plases,” said Andy, with several enormous bows ; and, taking his stand with Dogrose, behind and a little to the left of the Queen, he gazed with astonishment on the festive scene.

No mortal pen can properly describe the beauty of the fairies’ ball-room. The walls and ceiling were woven of dark green reeds, garlanded with exquisite flowers, amongst which were myriads of glow-worms, casting over everything a soft, silvery, and at the same time brilliant light. For musicians, there were five highly-trained nightingales,

to whose thrilling notes the feet of the merry little folk kept time. At one end of the room were a number of water-lilies, and from the centre of each sprang a tiny jet of the most delicious scent. Hanging from the roof above these sweet fountains were five lovely tiger moths which, by keeping up a constant flutter with their wings, wafted the delicious perfumes to every corner of the room. At the other end, skilfully constructed of honeysuckle, was a covered gallery in which were the nightingales. Seats there were none, nor were they required, for the fairies never seemed to tire. This rather astonished Andy, as their dance appeared exceedingly monotonous, the dancers merely joining hands and forming a ring; then, with many skips, jumps, and queer pranks, the circle first moved round one way and then another.

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The floor of the ball-room was entirely covered with fishes' scales which shone brightly in the silvery glow-worm light, and, being skilfully fixed and arranged, gave the greatest satisfaction to the little dancers.

Outside was a large open expanse of short springy turf, in the centre of which stood a gigantic toadstool, and round this a large fairy-ring. Here could dance those fairies who preferred the open air and moonlight, to the more gorgeous ball-room.

The guests having all arrived, the Fairy Queen turned her attention to Andy.

“Well, how do you like being a fairy?” was her first question.

“Faith, I hardly know,” he replied; “I’ve not tried it long enough.”

“You will soon know more about it,” said the Queen. “But join the ring; Dog-

rose is dying for a dance. Why not satisfy her?"

"I will—why wouldn't I? Come, me darlint," seizing Dogrose by the hand; "I'm the boy that can give you satisfaction, though it's poor opinion of your music I have." So saying, Andy dashed into the merry throng, dragging Dogrose along with him, and astonished the little fairies by a vigorous exhibition of heel-and-toe dancing.

Jigs being a novelty in Fairyland, a circle was soon made round Andy of admiring little ladies. This naturally annoyed and roused the jealousy of the sterner sex. Many of these, not to be outdone by the stranger, after having watched him carefully, retired into quiet corners, and there practised the various jig-steps. With the quickness which is natural to fairies, they soon became proficient, and before long as fine a jig was

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being danced as had ever been seen in Old Ireland. The obliging nightingales, too, entered into the spirit of the thing, and did their best to make their warbling time with the quick footsteps of the dancers. All the guests were in a high state of delight, and the Queen was enchanted with the novelty which Andy had introduced.

And so the merry dance continued, trippingly, rompingly, and with much heel-and-toeing. What had threatened to be a miserable failure, owing to Queen Carrigeen's spite, was actually turning out the very best ball of the season.

Fairy Queen Cribby's heart warmed to Andy, and, anxious to show her gratitude for his introduction of the Irish jig, she despatched the Green Beetle to summon him to her presence. **BUT ANDY WAS NOT TO BE FOUND!** Search was made high and

low, but all that could be heard of him was, that he had been seen to leave the ball-room a short time before, accompanied by Dog-rose. And then it was noticed that the fairy spinster was also missing.

Great was the excitement, and various the conjectures, of Queen Cribby and her courtiers as to the whereabouts of their new jig-instructor and the fairy old maid.

Possibly it may not seem very odd, that after a vigorous dance Andy should take a moonlight stroll with a charming little fairy; but among the "Good People" such an event was unparalleled. They all are enthusiastically fond of dancing—it is in fact their greatest pleasure—and, unlike mortals, they feel no fatigue. It thus happens that the ball-room is never left until the moon begins to sink behind the hills; and then, not without regret, they seek shelter in

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mossy caves for the day—being children of moonlight rather than of the sun.

The Green Beetle, the Queen's favourite page, having a practical mind, was the first to offer a sensible suggestion.

“If your Majesty will allow me,” said he, “I'll go and consult your royal Owl; he may, very likely, be able to tell us where to look for them.”

“Ask him, by all means, if you think him wiser than I.” Fairy Queen Cribby was a little put out.

The Green Beetle, taking his royal mistress at her word, quickly set out in search of the Owl. He found that remarkable bird picking the bones of an unfortunate field-mouse, and thus addressed him :

“O, wise Owl! the mortal whom our Queen changed into a fairy is not to be found, and she desires his presence.”



“ Well, I can't be responsible for mortals the Queen chooses to play tricks with, can I ? ” replied the Owl, irritably.

As the green turtle was to a certain gormandising alderman at a city feast, so was the tender field-mouse to the voracious Owl at supper-time. As the alderman once objected to any conversation being held during turtle-time, on the grounds that, in talking, he was apt to swallow pieces of turtle without noticing the flavour, so did the Owl now object to any questions being put to him whilst he was engaged in devouring the delicate mouse ; hence, possibly, his irritable reply. But the Beetle was not to be put off, and he well knew whom he had to deal with.

“ It was, ” he continued with great deference, “ on account of your superior wisdom ” —here the Owl smiled, which encouraged

the Beetle—"that I was sent to you. The Queen thought you might be able to suggest where to look for them."

"Them! Why, I thought only one was lost," said the Owl, with a surprised look.

"Dogrose has also disappeared."

Putting his head on one side, the sagacious bird remained for a few minutes in deep thought; the Green Beetle resting quiet the while, being too well-bred to disturb him. Suddenly the Owl jerked out—

"She's a spinster, isn't she?"

"Yes, and an aged one," answered the Beetle.

"Well, if she remained unmarried she would be packed off to the mountains, in a few days' time, to rejuvenate, wouldn't she?"

"I suppose so," said the Beetle, who did

not see what this had to do with the question.

“ Well, what more do you want to know ? ” asked the Owl.

“ I want to know where to find—— ”

“ Where to find them ? Why, in the marriage office to be sure ! ” screamed the Queen’s Councillor, with hoots of laughter.

“ Gracious goodness ! ” ejaculated the startled Beetle, and without even thanking the knowing bird for his information, he hurried off to Queen Cribby, who pooh-poohed the idea—possibly as it was not her own—but consented to send some of her courtiers to make enquiries.

The marriage office, to which the Owl referred, was a little cave, presided over by an aged fairy. Here marriages were performed with celerity and at small expense. The payment of a fee to the fairy official, a

few questions asked by him and satisfactorily answered, a few promises easily made—perhaps as easily broken, and the writing the names of the loving couple in a book, included everything that was necessary to complete the ceremony.

The Owl had rightly guessed that Dogrose would try her hardest to entrap Andy into a marriage. She had soon found that in persuading him to come to the ball-room she had made a great mistake, inasmuch as there were among the dancers many prettier, and, to the fickle Andy, more attractive faces than her own. So soon, therefore, as the jig waged fast and furious, and she imagined that they would not be missed, she whispered Andy that the Queen desired him to leave the hall. He, totally unsuspecting of any ruse, readily acquiesced; and soon they were walking along a mossy

moonlit path, sometimes shaded by the lofty bracken. Dogrose now turned over in her mind what was her next best move. A bright idea struck her :—

“I am ordered by the Queen, dear Andy, to tell you it is her wish we should be married to-night.”

“Married! to-night!” gasped Andy.

“Yes, and we shall have to obey her, or be severely punished,” said the designing spinster.

The poor fellow's feelings were the reverse of enviable. He believed what he had been told, and felt he was in the “Good People's” power. At one moment he thought he would make a run for it, at another, that he would refuse flatly, and take the consequences. In the end, the fairy's fascinating manner overcame his objections, and he nerved himself to face the ordeal.

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“Faith, now I’m a fairy, me own wife wouldn’t own me, and me friends wouldn’t know me, so I may just as well take a fairy-wife; especially as the Queen orders it,” he thought to himself.

Dogrose, delighted to see her plan likely to succeed, quickly led ~~the~~ way to the marriage cave, where, after some further reluctance, Andy gave way and the ceremony was performed.

It so happened that as he was imprinting the marital kiss on the lips of his fairy-wife, the courtiers sent in search of the couple entered the cave.

“What, Dogrose, you married!” they cried with one breath.

Dogrose simpered out an assent.

“The Queen has been searching for Andy and you everywhere, and is in a towering rage at not being able to find

you," said the Queen's page, the Green Beetle.

"Why, you told me the Queen ordered us to be married," said Andy, turning indignantly to Dogrose, who was too confused to reply.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive!" said the aged fairy, sententiously, who had performed the marriage ceremony. He had his fee safely in his pocket.

"It's no use my entering into any explanation here," said the unhappy bride, who was truly in a fix; "let us go to the Queen."

So off they went, Andy leading, the courtiers following, and Dogrose—or, as we ought to call her, Mrs. Allen—walking dejectedly in the rear. "Whatever happens," she thought, "I have a husband, and that

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will save me from those awful ten years of solitude in the mountains. I must throw myself on the mercy of Queen Cribby."

The dancing was over. The guests had departed, some on the backs of sturdy may-flies, others in light thistledown chariots drawn by various flying insects, and those who could afford neither the luxuries of may-flies nor carriages used their own wings. The grandest of the chariots was, perhaps, a large family coach, like the rest of thistledown, and which belonged to Queen Bushy, mother of Prince Purple-heather, the happy bridegroom of that morning. This conveyance was drawn by no less than ten magnificent stag-beetles, harnessed to it with golden threads.

Just as Andy and his bride, with the courtiers, arrived at the ball-room, Queen Bushy having taken her leave of Queen



Cribby, was about departing. She was the last to leave, having remained later than the other guests in order to interchange some words of sympathy with the mother of her son's wife. Slipping into her carriage, she gave the word to her fairy coachman, who immediately waved his whip over the stag-beetles. To Andy's amazement, they, with one accord, spread their wings, and up went beetles, chariot, Queen and all into the air with a great whirring, and they were soon out of sight, going in the direction of Bushy Island.

The Green Beetle now entered the ball-room, leaving the rest of the little party outside. He quickly returned with the news that the Queen was very pleased to hear Dogrose and Andy were found, and wished to see them immediately. Without loss of time they trooped into the flowery

hall, the whole of which, with the exception of the end where stood the Queen's throne, was in darkness. Economy being studied as much in Fairyland as in other places, the greater part of the glow-worms had been extinguished immediately after the departure of the guests.

Our little friends ranged themselves before the Queen, who was the first to speak.

"Why have you been away so long? and Dogrose too!" she demanded.

"If you plaze, yer honour, marm, this young woman—fairy I mane—tould me—"

"Told you what?" asked the Queen, for Andy had stopped short, his better nature prompting him not to get a charming fairy—old maid though she had been—into trouble. But Dogrose saved him the pain of making an explanation.

"Will your Majesty pardon an act which,

though almost unpardonable, I had great excuse for doing?" the fairy Mrs. Allen said tremulously.

"Well, let us hear about it," replied Queen Cribby, by no means ungraciously.

Dogrose, or Dogrose Allen as she should now be called, then told her tale. How, fearful of never getting a husband, and of being sent for ten years' solitary rejuvenation to the mountains, she had resorted to stratagem and secured Andy for her mate. With many tears she told how, being at a loss for other means, she had made use of the Queen's name to induce Andy to consent to the marriage. With pitiful words she painted the sorrows of unfortunate aged spinsters, and, winding up with an appeal for forgiveness, she so wrought on the feelings of the amiable Fairy Queen, that stopping her she said :—

“ Well, Dogrose Allen, if Andy will forgive you, we will ; but possibly he may not wish to stay with us. We had intended him to remain a fairy for this one night only. What say you, Andy ? ”

“ Musha, faith ! I’m after thinking that me wife wouldn’t like it at all,” muttered the bridegroom, rather confusedly.

“ Oh, I would like it, indeed I would, dearest Andy ! ” cried Dogrose quickly.

“ But I don’t mane you, I mane me ither wife—the rale original,” said Andy, turning pale at thoughts of what Bridget would say—for Bridget had a tongue.

On hearing this, Fairy Queen Cribby nearly swooned.

“ His other wife ! ” every one exclaimed.

Dogrose was the first to collect her ideas after this shock.

“ Your Majesty, it will be all right.

This other wife is, of course, a mortal, and as my dear Andy is now a fairy, and as according to fairy law, fairies cannot marry, or be considered to be married to mortals, he can have no wife at the present time but me."

"Oh, be the powers, but if Bridget were to hear ye say that!" thought Andy to himself.

"That is a very different matter," said the Queen, "and your argument appears to us to be a good one, Dogrose; but it certainly seems wrong for Andy to marry again whilst his first wife is living. We'll leave it to him to do what he thinks right. Now, sir, decide. Will you stop with us, or return to your mortal shape?"

Without any hesitation Andy decided on the latter course, and replied:—

"If yer honour could manage that this

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young lady"—pointing to Dogrose—"don't have to suffer the ten years in the mountains, I'd like to be a mortal again."

"That's a kindly thought of yours, Andy," said the Queen, glad to see a way out of the difficulty. "As Dogrose can now hardly be called a spinster, she shall not go for the ten years, but shall be looked upon as a married person, and, on your leaving here, shall join the aged married couples in the mountains for three years. At the end of that time she will return to us young, and we trust, beautiful, and speedily become a more satisfactory bride than she is at present. What say you to that, Dogrose?"

"Your Majesty is too good," replied Dogrose, thankful indeed to get out of the scrape so easily.

"That's settled then," said Queen Cribby; and turning to Andy, "There is another

the place where the ring had been lost, and soon came to the conclusion that it was not there. No cranny that it could possibly have slipped into was left unexplored by the keen-sighted animals. Certain that they had been sent to the wrong place, they were on their way back to the Queen, when they were stopped by a messenger from the otter-postman, then in prison. The message was to the effect that he—the postman—knew all about the lost ring, and that they should see him about it. Quickly the otters hurried to their brother's cell.

“Is the Queen very anxious to get the ring?” said the prisoner.

“Very,” was the reply.

“Well, she won't know anything about it, unless she lets me out,” remarked the old postman, rather defiantly.

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“If we give that message,” replied an otter, older and wiser than the others, “you are certain not to be let out of prison ; but if you will leave it to me, I think I can arrange it all right for you.”

“Do your best, and I’ll thank you,” said the captive, and the other otters left him.

On reaching the Queen, the spokesman said :

“May it please your Majesty, we, your Majesty’s humble servants, have diligently searched in the place pointed out to us for the ring, and can assure your Majesty it is not there. Our unfortunate comrade, the postman, now in prison, tells us that he knows what has become of it ; and he humbly begs that, in return for his information, you will graciously give him his freedom.”

Now this was not exactly what the grumpy



old postman had said, but it was to the same purpose—and more diplomatic.

“Once the ring is found, he shall have his freedom,” said Queen Cribby, with a gracious air.

The postman-otter was then sent for, and quickly made his appearance.

“We have consented to give you your freedom if you find the lost ring for us. Tell us quickly who has it, and where it is,” commanded the Queen.

“Andy had it, and it is now in his boat,” replied the otter confidently.

Everyone smiled incredulously.

“You are trifling with us,” said the Fairy Queen sternly.

“Not at all,” replied the old postman coolly; “but I had perhaps better explain. I was going my usual rounds yesterday evening, and was passing under a boat,

when I noticed something falling, glistening, through the water; and, before I could go to see what it was, that old rascal, Sixfoot Jack—one of Queen Carrigeen's fish subjects—dashed out of a bed of weeds close by and swallowed it. As the ring was lost yesterday evening, and in that place, I suppose Sixfoot Jack has it."

"But you said it was in Andy's boat," interposed the Queen.

"If you'll only let me finish, you'll see that it is so," continued the otter. "As I was coming in this afternoon from delivering your invitations for the ball, I saw Sixfoot Jack lifted into Andy's boat—and that's all I know about it."

"Begorra, then, I've got the ring afther all!" cried Andy, joyously. "But how am I to get me cot?"

"Leave that to us," replied the Queen.

“To the shore now before the sun rises, or else you will have to remain a fairy for another twelve hours”; and turning to the otter-postman: “Though you behaved most infamously in not delivering the invitation to Queen Carrigeen, nevertheless, as we have given our royal word, if your tale proves true, you shall be set at liberty.”

Soon all were gathered on the shore. Andy was led to his former heather couch. Once more the fairy Master of the Ceremonies brought the Queen her wand, and the suitable words for the occasion carefully written down, so that there should be no mistake this time. Dogrose, bending over Andy, now bade him a pathetic farewell, and, dissolving in tears, retreated into the background. Standing on the rock above Andy, the Fairy Queen slowly waved her wand, repeating as she did so:

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“ Rest once more on heather bed !  
Gently change to mortal form ;  
Tall and ugly, hair so red,  
As when, driven by the storm,  
First you landed on this isle,  
And so nearly marred our ball  
Which you danced at for a while,  
In our Royal Fairy Hall.  
Never more Dogrose you'll see ;  
Often will she think of thee——”

At this point Dogrose's feelings overcame her. She rushed past the Queen—nearly overturning her from the rock ; and, throwing herself beside Andy, buried her face in her hands.

“ Oh ! my love, my love, do not leave me !” she moaned ; and turning to the Queen, who had hardly recovered her usual serenity of aspect, “ Can your Majesty be so heartless as to separate two loving hearts ?”

Fairy Queen Cribby smiled, and an audible titter arose from the fairies gathered around.

“Why do you all insult me in my grief?” asked Dogrose, pathetically.

“Gaze on your lover, foolish fairy, and let that be our answer,” said the Queen.

Dogrose, startled by the tone of the Queen’s voice, turned her eyes on the recumbent Andy. For a moment she was speechless; and then, raising her hands above her head, half running and half flying, she fled towards the inmost recesses of the island; filling the air with her dolorous shrieks.

What Dogrose had seen was sufficient to make any love-stricken fairy shriek. Andy was just in the middle state, midway between being a fairy and a mortal—for the Queen had not quite finished changing

him, when Dogrose had interfered. He was thus a gruesome sight. From the fairy size of six inches he had grown to be an ugly dwarf of about four feet high. His tiny wings had not yet left his shoulders, whilst his red beard and hair had reappeared in full shock luxuriance. One of his arms was still minute and fair-like, the other of full man's size. The sight of him must have effectually banished all love from the heart of Dogrose.

The fairies were standing in a circle round the now incomplete Andy, and the proceedings were for the moment stopped. Suddenly the fairy M. C. rushed before the Queen.

“ Oh! your Majesty, quickly finish the change. There is not a moment to be lost. In three minutes the sun will rise, when it will be too late; and he will have to stop

in his present awful condition for another day."

Andy had been awakened by Dogrose's shrieks, but had said nothing for fear of breaking some spell or other—he had always read that spells and charms must be wrought in solemn silence. But on hearing the Master of the Ceremonies' statement, his consternation knew no bounds.

"Oh wirra, wirra!" he exclaimed, almost weeping, "what'll I do? Faith you might as well kill me outright. If I'm seen like this, the bhoys will say I'm a grilla, and I'll be hunted out of the counthry. Oh, why didn't ——"

"Silence!" commanded the Queen. "Lie down quickly, and we shall yet have time. Now, Fairies, do not forget the chorus."

The "grilla" quickly lay down again

on the heather bed from which, in his excitement, he had risen. A few waves from the fairy wand, and he again was sleeping.

“Where did I leave off?” asked the Queen.

“Just where ‘Dogrose’ comes in, your Majesty,” replied the fairy M. C.

“Oh, yes,”—and then from the rock, waving her wand, she continued her work of changing Andy into a mortal :

“Never more Dogrose you’ll see ;  
Often will she think of thee.  
Cast aside thy fairy wings,  
For a mortal, useless things.  
Farewell ! Andy ; and once more  
Be a mortal, as before.  
Now my sisters, sing with me ;  
Sing the chorus merrily.”

As the Queen of Cribby sang the last line, a faint yellowish glow began to light



up the eastern sky ; and overhead the few light fleecy clouds became tinged with a golden pink.

The Fairy Queen and her followers, all rising on their wings, allowed the light westerly breeze to waft them slowly towards the centre of the island.

As they receded they still sang their refrain :—

“ Farewell ! Andy, now, once more,  
Be a mortal, as before.  
Farewell ! Andy ; Farewell ! Farewell ! ”

Fainter and fainter grew their song ; and as the first ray of the rising sun shot above the grey hills, fairies had vanished, and song had ceased.

\* \* \* \* \*

For some hours the now complete and perfect mortal, wearied by the events of the

preceding night, slept undisturbed. It was not until the sun had reached a considerable height, and had for some time been doing its best to pierce his eyelids, that he awoke. Fairy associations were, for the first few minutes of his awakening, strong upon him.

“I did me besht not to get married, yer honour, marm, and what could a man do more? It was the young woman’s fault, she said yer honour wished it,” he muttered half awake, and, rolling over, would soon have been asleep again, but the sun would not allow it. Sending its scorching rays right into his face, it fairly forced him to wake up. Sitting up on his heather bed, and having finished rubbing his eyes, he looked around.

A lovely scene met Andy’s view. From the blue sky the sun shone in full mid-

summer splendour. A light westerly breeze ruffled the surface of the water, causing mimic waves to leap up as if anxious to meet the sunbeams which, illuminating their tiny crests, caused the blue lake to sparkle and glitter like molten gold. In the far distance undulating hills showed dimly through a blue haze. Dotted about the broad expanse of water were many islands, some deeply wooded, others covered with a tangled mass of hawthorn and under-wood. From the side of one devoted to pasture, and of the freshest and purest green, rose a lofty round tower, at the foot of which lay an ancient graveyard, and the picturesque ruins of an old monastic establishment.

The lovely morning and surroundings had an invigorating effect on Andy, now fully awake.

---

“The top of the morning to you, Misther Andy Allen, King of Oireland,” said he aloud. “Be the powers, if that isn’t me cot!”

Andy’s boat it was, and no other. The easterly gale of the night before, which had blown the boat away from Cribby and lodged it on Bushy Island, had abated. The wind having changed to the west, the boat was slowly drifting back, straight towards the place on the shore where Andy was standing.

In a very few minutes he was in his cot—as fishing boats are called on the Shannon. The sight of the enormous pike recalled the ring to his mind, and very anxious he was to find out if it was within the fish. Having no knife, all he could do was to start for home.

Soon he arrived at the little tumble-down

quay, where he found a number of people, amongst others, Bridget and his children. In a couple of minutes he was on shore, and in the arms of his sobbing and distracted wife, who was about starting with some of "the bhoys" to search for him.

On the way home Andy told of the storm and the night on the island, but the sly dog, at this time, omitted all mention of the fairies—possibly on account of the "Dogrose" incident.

Once in his cabin, Andy hastened to open the pike, and, to the amazement of his wife and children, the knife had hardly entered the fish before it struck against something metallic which, on further investigation, turned out to be the ring!

Before evening the reward was in Andy's pocket, to be shortly exchanged for a sturdy little cow. That night, with his

“dudeen” between his lips, and a glass of “poteen” at his elbow, Andy gave a true and faithful account of his adventures with the fairies and, promising never to go on Cribby Island again after nightfall, was duly forgiven his marriage with the fairy spinster.

Whether the fairies were so grateful for having learnt a new dance that they continued to shower benefits on Andy, or whether he became more industrious and steady, is not known, but at anyrate, from the date of his queer midsummer night’s dream, Andy’s good star seemed in the ascendant, and everything prospered with him. He is now a well-to-do “string” farmer, and always, let us hope, duly grateful to the good little fairies, by whose aid he found the ring.





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